

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
SE CORRIDOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN
MAYORAL HEARING

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, January 17, 2008

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 AUBREY D. THAGARD
Coordinator

3 JEFF DAVIS
4 Coordinator

5 GERALDINE GARDNER
Project Manager

6 KWAME R. BROWN
7 Councilmember

8 GILBERT BUSSEY

9 WILLIAM FARRIS, JR.

10 JAMES FERGUSON

11 RICHARD HAWKINS

12 LEROY HICKS

13 CARRIE JAMES

14 THELMA JONES

15 LAURA RICHARDS

16 DWAYNE ROBERSON

17 JUAN THOMPSON

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (6:20 p.m.)

3 MS. GARDNER: We'll get started.

4 Welcome to today's hearing of the

5 Pennsylvania Avenue, Southeast Corridor. I

6 want to thank the members of the _____

7 _____ are working very

8 diligently throughout this. It's been really

9 an 18-month process to get this plan

10 together.

11 Tonight's a culmination of that

12 work and we look forward very much to hearing

13 your comments in the draft plan. I also want

14 to thank our neighborhood planners from wards

15 6, 7, and 8, Jeff Davis, Evelyn Kasongo isn't

16 here tonight, but she worked very hard at

17 this plan, and Aubrey Thagard.

18 Also, I'd like to thank Geraldine

19 Gardner and Rosalynn Hughey for their efforts

20 to get through this. Additionally I'd like

- 21 to thank a member of our staff, Ed Estes,
- 22 who's done some of the graphics work that you

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1 see here tonight.

2 The purpose of the hearing is for
3 our office to receive your testimony in the
4 draft plan that was released December 6th.
5 We would like you to present your comments
6 and suggestions on the plan that we will then
7 use to _____ prior to bringing them to the
8 city council for consideration.

9 At the final public meeting, this
10 past June, we presented recommendations for
11 the five _____. We received a lot
12 of feedback from you about how to better
13 demonstrate how the balance should actually
14 look. So one of the things that you see
15 represented on the board that _____
16 some renderings of what the development might
17 look like, so you can get a better sense of
18 the size of the building, and what the
19 architectural character might be.

20 We've heard that preserving the

21 physical character of the community is really
22 important. And so we've tried to make sure

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1 the drawings reflected that physical
2 character.

3 One of the things that we've heard
4 throughout this process is that opportunity
5 for upgrading the retail choices along the
6 Corridor are really important, and that we
7 really heard you say that.

8 So we put our best-efforts into
9 this plan, with the idea of providing a
10 strategy that you think is liable to effect
11 the kind of retail services that the
12 residents of the Corridor said they liked and
13 need.

14 All of your comments will be
15 reflected on the record. I guess I'm saying
16 this because I already know. We've gotten
17 some comments already and I know we'll get to
18 hear a lot of comments tonight, that not
19 everyone in the community agrees that this is
20 the right strategy to pursue. We are eager

21 to hear your comments. We are.

22 This is our effort to try to get

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1 the retail that a lot of people have said
2 they wanted in the corridor. And we'll
3 reflect your comments on the record.

4 We will forward your response to
5 the city council to deliberate on the plan
6 because we know the success of implementing
7 the plan is going to rely on strong local
8 organizations and neighborhood leaders
9 that'll be able to be the stewards of growth
10 in investments and capital to make sure it
11 looks like what we want it to look like. We
12 look forward to continuing to work with our
13 stakeholders as we look forward to planning
14 this _____.

15 And what we plan to do is have
16 Aubrey Thagard do an overview of the plan,
17 and have Jeff Davis kind of go through the
18 ground rules. But what I might suggest in
19 recognition that Councilmember Kwame Brown
20 has joined us, and I know that he has a very

21 tight schedule tonight, he wanted to offer

22 comments. Right now, we'll be delighted to

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1 hear you.

2 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Good

3 evening.

4 SPEAKERS: Good evening.

5 MR. BROWN: Let me thank everyone

6 for just coming up in this cold, wet, snow.

7 Hopefully we'll actually all get home. But

8 _____ what do we think the

9 Office of Planning. Harriet has done a

10 phenomenal job, at least give the people a

11 sense of what we are trying to do, right?

12 And one of the things is young neighborhoods.

13 So _____. I _____

14 and no matter where I go, no matter when I

15 was knocking the doors, whatever, I want you

16 to go fight so we could have some _____

17 with one side Pennsylvania Avenue looks like

18 the other side of Pennsylvania Avenue. And

19 to do anything about _____ we

20 do not create an environment in which the
21 people of the neighborhood getting to feel
22 it's too big, and that produces certain

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1 things that people don't want. They would
2 not allow any of the shopping centers that
3 have chicken wings, liquor stores,
4 hairdressers, right, and check-cashers.

5 There are a couple things that can
6 be built. I want to specifically talk about
7 Penn Branch, right, because as we look at
8 what we do, when we do the overall plan for
9 the Penn Branch area, if the best that we
10 want to see is just a strip mall that has
11 things like that in it I have a feeling that
12 I would do, and someone would be so mad at me
13 and say, who gave that money to do that. So
14 we have to create a balance.

15 Now if we can do that, some things
16 that we do so we can get quality retail.
17 Nothing worse than opening up a shopping
18 center on this side of the river and is not
19 good quality. No one will be happy. You
20 know that, and I know that. It will look

21 good, it will feel good, but you will still

22 go across the bridge and other places to

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1 shop, eat, and do the things that you want to
2 do.

3 So we have to find a balance, and
4 that's why we're supporting this plan. I
5 know there are going to be questions, and
6 some people are not happy, and we have to
7 figure out what the balance is.

8 But it all starts to me on what you
9 want. Right? If you want chicken places
10 and CVS -- I really love CVS, but there is
11 not one 24-hour pharmacy east of the
12 Anacostia River. So anybody could come
13 _____ a quality retailer, a quality
14 restaurant, quality amenities.

15 In order to do that, we need to
16 have what is the best look, if you look at
17 these maps, to be able to make that happen.
18 So I'm going to be supportive. And what you
19 are doing here _____ public input
20 _____ are going to hear what you

- 21 have to say, and try and get as much as you
- 22 can get included.

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1 I have a feeling we are not going
2 to include everything. People are going to
3 be mad if someone can't deliver. But if I
4 can't provide quality retail over here, then
5 I have a feeling that more people than that
6 will be mad.

7 And they will say, how did you
8 allow this to happen in community economic
9 development? So we are now going to do is
10 provide the residents —————

11 its 34 years, where people have been
12 promising for 34 years.

13 And whatever plan it has to
14 include that people coming together, not only
15 now, but in the future, because, if not, you
16 are going to come back and do this all over.

17 And nobody wants to do that again because no
18 matter how long ————— smother
19 your plans.

20 I'm going to be doing this for next

- 21 two years, I know, right? Another five, six,
22 seven, eight, nine, ten years and doing

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1 nothing _____
_____.

2 I'll try again. So, let's get the plan done,
3 and do something. Let's see if it happens.

4 So I just wanted to stop by
5 _____ that important for you
6 to come by to say hello. _____ going
7 to listen to you. _____.

8 So Harriet, thank you and your team for all
9 the work that you've done.

10 We want to, of course, add some
11 suggestions and have some modifications, but
12 we want something that's going to give us
13 quality retail, quality affordable housing
14 over here in this particular area. Does
15 anyone disagree with that? Ann, do you
16 disagree with that?

17 SPEAKER: I have a question.

18 MR. BROWN: Can I take your
19 question? One question.

20 SPEAKER: _____.

21 MR. BROWN: Well, I can take one

22 for you.

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1 SPEAKER: _____

2 _____.

3 MR. BROWN: I'm supportive of
4 whoever gives us quality retail, a quality
5 shopping center as I look over at -- let me
6 give you a perfect example. How come we
7 can't have a Harris Teeter? How come we
8 can't have this stuff, right? And I drive
9 down Pennsylvania Avenue and I passed where
10 they are building a new Harris Teeter, and
11 they are building some of the stuff. And he
12 said, why can't one side look like the other
13 side?

14 And then, I asked these questions
15 to Harriet and I asked these questions to all
16 the developers. Why can't I do it? Then
17 give me the plan that allows me to do that.
18 Right?

19 This is going to be financially

20 feasible to make sure that if the city puts
21 in this money, we do whatever we can to make
22 that happen. I think that's what residents

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1 have asked me to figure out how to do, and
2 that's what I'm trying to figure.

3 I don't know if that is the exact
4 one, but whoever gives us quality retail and
5 affordable housing in a way that our
6 residents want, I want to be supportive and
7 have a plan that reflects that. I don't want
8 a plan that doesn't give me that, because
9 then you won't get it. Yes.

10 SPEAKER: Good evening.

11 MR. BROWN: Good evening.

12 SPEAKER: I'm for progress, and I'm
13 for change, but progress doesn't have to be
14 so big --

15 MR. BROWN: Well I think what this
16 plan lays out is the opportunity for it to be
17 big. Now if we do see people to come through
18 and have proposals that may not need all the
19 space, that's a different conversation. But
20 let me ask you the question. What are you --

- 21 who would you like to see? I think you are
- 22 talking about Penn Branch. Is that correct?

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1 SPEAKER: Yes.

2 MR. BROWN: Okay. Tell me, who
3 would you like to see at Penn Branch? What
4 would be an ideal -- if you were to get your
5 wish, what would you like to see at Penn
6 Branch as it relates to retail?

7 SPEAKER: I don't have any. I
8 don't have a plan, but that's all.

9 MR. BROWN: Oh, okay. Well, we
10 just having an off the record conversation,
11 right?

12 SPEAKER: Yes. I don't have a
13 plan, but my concern is size.

14 MR. BROWN: The size limit?

15 SPEAKER: I think, once we get this
16 idea, it's so large, _____.
17 And soon that big _____ we talking
18 about, it's going to move out into the
19 neighborhood.

20 MR. BROWN: We can't. We are not

21 going to --

22 SPEAKER: _____

—

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1 _____ and two-hour parking

2 all around it, and the neighborhood --

3 MR. BROWN: Well, let me promise

4 you this. This is my neighborhood like it's

5 your neighborhood. I want to see all the

6 stuff that you talked about. So it's not

7 like we are trying to create something that's

8 going to push people out of this

9 neighborhood.

10 Let me be very clear, because I'll

11 be pushing myself out. Well, I can't afford

12 to go no where. I'm going to be here. We

13 are stuck. This is where I'll be. I can't

14 afford no other house, so I tell my wife, get

15 ready, change the paint, we are going to be

16 here for a long time.

17 So I understand, this is a personal

18 -- I'm personally invested like you.

19 Whatever it is, and whatever it's going to

20 be, I'm personally invested like you are

- 21 personally invested. And I'm very much
- 22 concerned about making sure that it doesn't,

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1 you know, we don't start tearing down other
2 houses to continue to make this a big
3 _____ development. I don't think
4 that's the plan. Okay.

5 All right, thank you. I just have
6 to go, but I won't be coming. I'll be in
7 Ward 7, going to an education meeting, and
8 then going to _____ meeting at 7:00 and
9 then back to Roosevelt about 8:30.

10 It was that important for me to
11 come up and thank Harriet and listen to the
12 residents. I'm going to be looking at the
13 feedback and making decisions based on what
14 our residents want and that's in the best
15 interest of our residents. Okay.

16 I thank everyone. God bless.

17 MR. THAGARD: Thank you, Councilman
18 Brown. I'm from the D.C. Office of Planning.
19 I'm a neighborhood planner assigned to Ward
20 8. Tonight, it's my responsibility to kind

21 of give a very brief overview of the contents

22 of the plan, kind of give you -- for those of

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1 you who maybe not as familiar as others
2 who've been participating, exactly what was
3 intended in the plan.

4 As you can also see here to my
5 right, and to the rear of the room here, as
6 we have it set up, the various boards that
7 show height and massing diagrams as well as
8 conceptual renderings for the site that we
9 studied throughout this 18-month process
10 here. So in the interests of time I'll be as
11 brief as possible and then we will go into
12 the ground rules for providing testimony this
13 evening. Basically, with regards to this --

14 SPEAKER: _____

15 _____

16 _____.

17 MR. THAGARD: Well, we'll try to be
18 as efficient with your time as possible. We
19 also know there is another meeting going on

20 tonight. Temperatures are dropping, ice,
21 freezing rain expected for the metropolitan
22 areas. So we have to make sure that everyone

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1 gets home safely.

2 In regard to the details in
3 development plan, let's take a little bit of
4 a historical back to, I think it was 19-, no,
5 I'm sorry, the year 2000, and the
6 Pennsylvania Avenue Taskforce that I came
7 aboard at the Office of Planning in 2002,
8 which was a multi-organizational effort for
9 revitalization of Pennsylvania Avenue,
10 Southeast, especially east of the river.

11 Finally, we got started in 2006,
12 with the corridor plan, as part of the Bay
13 Street program, and the plan is basically
14 meant to address these following issues.

15 Land use and zoning, we did an
16 existing conditions analysis, we performed a
17 market analysis covering a real-estate market
18 from both this perspective on a local basis,
19 meaning the corridor itself study area, which
20 starts at 2nd Avenue and Independence Avenue,

- 21 west of the river, and proceeds east across
- 22 the Anacostia River to Southern Avenue.

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1 And then, from there with the
2 economic analysis, we took a regional
3 perspective as well to see where the area
4 stood, regionally speaking, both from the
5 District itself and then Maryland and
6 Virginia and the district itself. So from
7 there we went into our own design analysis,
8 and that's how we came up with the
9 recommendations that basically is the meat of
10 the plan that you see before you.

11 Now I looked at several opportunity
12 sites in particular, as you have seen here,
13 around the circumference here, 1401
14 Pennsylvania Avenue, 1531 and 1537
15 Pennsylvania Avenue, 1550 Pennsylvania
16 Avenue, the 2300 block at L'Enfant Square --
17 well it's actually a 1500 block -- sorry,
18 2300 block at Pennsylvania Avenue. The 2500
19 and 2600 blocks at Pennsylvania Avenue, the
20 Penn Branch shopping center, and Fort Davis

21 shopping center.

22 Those are the opportunity sites.

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1 We do not make recommendations for several
2 nodes along the corridor, really because the
3 amount of development that's already taken
4 place or the lack of opportunities. Those
5 two areas are the Capitol Hill sub area,
6 which is basically between 2nd and 11th,
7 along the Corridor, west of the river, and
8 then the Randle Highlands area, which is
9 basically from the 2800 block up to the --
10 I'm sorry, the 3100 block, Pennsylvania
11 Avenue, just before you get to the Penn
12 Branch shopping center here.

13 So those areas are very stable. We
14 felt that there is a need to come in and
15 change the existing myths, especially where,
16 for instance, with Randle Highlands, you've
17 got existing green space as well as make sure
18 some commercial and residential. On one side
19 you have, of course, the single-family homes,
20 on the other side you have some multi-family

21 housing as well.

22 So if we start with the 1401

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1 Pennsylvania Avenue site, which is adjacent
2 to the Jenkins Rows -- I'm sorry, the _____
3 Project which _____ mixed-use
4 project or have a Harris Teeter, and have
5 about four stories, I believe -- five stories
6 of residential, above. That was an exiting
7 project, and I think, now they've started to
8 move in. And Harris Teeter should be open
9 soon.

10 SPEAKER: March.

11 MR. THAGARD: March. So that will
12 be going underway. So we want to continue
13 that type of development in the area.

14 The 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue side,
15 which is New York Avenue Pizza site, we want
16 to stay within the confines of that envelope
17 in terms of development, with four to six
18 stories for development. We wanted to -- we
19 believe that type could provide a range of 30
20 to 50 condominiums with ground floor retail,

- 21 five story building, making sure that the
- 22 ground floor for retail has at least 14 foot

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1 ceiling heights there, with a range of 6,000
2 to 14,000 square feet of retail space, which
3 could approximately accommodate three to four
4 small shops.

5 SPEAKER: How much did you say --

6 MR. THAGARD: I'm sorry. We are
7 not taking questions during --

8 SPEAKER: _____.

9 MR. THAGARD: Which one? Between
10 the thrift shops? Is that what you're
11 talking about?

12 SPEAKER: Yes.

13 MR. THAGARD: Yes, that would be
14 the thrift shops. Coming down further closer
15 to the Barney Circle site, 1550 in
16 particular, that site was a used car lot. We
17 are talking about a range of 25 to 35
18 condominiums. Of course, 14 foot ceiling
19 heights for the retail, four story building
20 with a range of 5,000 to 6,000 square feet of

- 21 retail, which typically means you average out
- 22 around one to two retail spaces depending on

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1 what type of store you are talking about
2 here.

3 Both these buildings will basically
4 help to form a new signature entry west of
5 the river as you cross the Sousa Bridge, and
6 as you can see, at those boards right here,
7 the first four boards here, what we try to do
8 is match that in terms of the architecture,
9 urban design characteristics.

10 As you see there, a number of town
11 homes, some have to be converted into
12 commercial use, but there's still that
13 residential feeling there as well.

14 As you come across the Sousa
15 Bridge, you come into the 2300 and the 2500
16 block of Pennsylvania Avenue. As you know,
17 there is already one project underway on 2300
18 block.

19 Our general recommendations take
20 advantage of the existing height, and

- 21 basically suppose anywhere from five to seven
- 22 stories is possible within the existing zone,

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1 using the club.

2 And if they provide ground floor
3 retail or another commercial use on the
4 ground floor, they're given a small bonus,
5 five feet, which is, maybe up to my shoulder,
6 probably shorter than that. I've shrunk a
7 bit. But still, just a little bit of
8 additional height on that height there for
9 the building itself.

10 That project that's underway has
11 gone through the zoning commission. And
12 actually, it's smaller in terms of its height
13 than what's normally allowed under that. You
14 can go up to 65 feet. The building is at 59
15 feet. So that project there we felt proposed
16 the fact they are going through a process.
17 We didn't want to taint that development
18 process. We are trying to overexert in our
19 involvement in that, but to, at least,
20 provide guidance with that in regards to the

21 zoning regulations and urban design concerns.

22 But 2300, 2400 block, we also have

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1 another opportunity site further up, which is
2 the strip mall. And at that site we believe
3 that about 16 to 17 condominiums could be
4 accommodated at that site, with five to six
5 stories of height, meaning, one storey taken
6 out for retail and four, possibly, five
7 stories above. 14 foot ceiling heights with
8 regards to the ground floor retail, and
9 42,000 square feet of retail, which is
10 possible they could have anywhere to
11 somewhere along the lines of about six to
12 seven retail shops, once again depending on
13 the type of retail operation that we want to
14 locate there.

15 So we felt it was a good
16 opportunity there at that location to provide
17 really a signature corner as you're coming
18 across the Sousa Bridge, to provide that, an
19 impact of retail with additional uses of, in
20 particular the house.

- 21 Vehicular access, coming off the
- 22 side streets and hopefully with underground

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1 parking.

2 Moving down the corridor to the
3 Penn Branch shopping center, which is
4 obviously another signature site and probably
5 the largest development site along the
6 corridor here, for a range of 20 to 30,000
7 square feet of retail with 150 to 180, which
8 is basically along the Pennsylvania Avenue
9 side here, judge that there's 20 to 30,000
10 square feet of retail space. And then as
11 you're coming down and behind along the
12 Branch Avenue side, 150 to 180 condominium
13 units is possible to support that, besides
14 retail.

15 But a range of 20 to 40,000 square
16 feet of office space can remain for small
17 business services and government services, so
18 that means not only the type of government
19 services that you currently see there now,
20 such as DMV, D.C. Water and Sewer, but also

- 21 the type of neighborhood services such as
- 22 your accountants, lawyers, doctors, et

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1 cetera, could be accommodated at that site as
2 well.

3 So we're talking a max of five
4 stories, with likely three stories facing
5 Pennsylvania Avenue and taking advantage of
6 the topography that would actually get you to
7 five stories at Penn Branch Avenue here.

8 Lastly we get to the Fort Davis
9 shopping center area. There are two sites
10 there we've originally looked at. One was
11 the ————— shopping center, and then across
12 the street, you've had the Fairfax Village
13 shopping center. We believe that with some
14 minor cosmetic changes of some of those right
15 now as market states that the Fairfax Village
16 shopping center actually works, but it makes
17 it not necessarily, but I think most people
18 in the community would imagine is the most
19 desirable mix. But there could be a better
20 mix there, for the time being.

21 However, at the Fort Davis shopping
22 center I think it's just an opportunity to

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1 provide a better type of mix of retail with
2 24,000 to 28,000 square feet of retail space,
3 that was just basically your basic café type
4 of shops and other community- serving retail,
5 and of course, providing small service
6 business office space as well as government
7 service office space.

8 Fifty to sixty five condominium
9 units could be accommodated on that site, at
10 a building height range of about four to five
11 stories and once again our standard 14 feet
12 for the ceiling height, for retail on the
13 ground floor there.

14 Now with all of that in mind, now
15 I'm going to allow you guys to get started
16 with questions here, and in just a moment
17 Jeff's going to come up and give you the
18 ground rules for how you're going to give
19 your testimony tonight. Thank you.

20 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Aubrey.

21 Well, tonight it's not about us talking to
22 you, tonight it's about hearing you, from

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1 you. It's not about discussion. We've had a
2 lot of discussion so far, and we know where
3 we are.

4 Tonight it's about you having the
5 opportunity to put on the public record your
6 comments for the plan. You'll have three
7 minutes to speak, up at the microphone, and I
8 can copy written testimony as well, and if
9 you don't get through everything that you had
10 written down, be assured that anything that
11 you turn in, in writing, gets turned in to
12 council with everything else.

13 We'll have a list of all the
14 comments that were turned in, in writing, a
15 transcription of all the oral comments and
16 all that will go to council. And so after
17 tonight, this is out of our hands, this goes
18 to council.

19 This will become a conversation
20 with the community here and Kwame Brown and

- 21 Fred Alexander and the other council members.
- 22 We look forward to continued discussion and

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1 debate at that level.

2 So we have a list here of everyone
3 who has signed up to speak. We do have, I
4 know, some folks who need to get to another
5 meeting. Can I get a show of hands of anyone
6 who needs to leave for a 7:00 o'clock
7 meeting?

8 Just the one. Have I got a
9 consensus, does any one mind if Mr. Hawkins
10 speaks first?

11 (No response)

12 MR. DAVIS: Okay, thank you. Then
13 I'll call you up one at a time and at the
14 end, if there's anyone else who would like to
15 speak, who has not spoken, we have extra
16 time. Everyone else is welcome to their
17 three minutes.

18 Please, when you come up, just
19 state your name and your affiliation and
20 speak clearly into the microphone and please

- 21 be sure, if you brought a written testimony,
22 that you turn that in to us before you leave,

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1 so that we can officially submit that as
2 well. So with that I would like to bring Mr.
3 Richard Hawkins.

4 MR. HAWKINS: My name is Richard
5 Hawkins and I'm a citizen of the Penn Branch
6 community. This opportunity to present my
7 views on the proposed building on the Penn
8 Branch shopping center is most appreciated.

9 Currently the shopping center at
10 the corner of Pennsylvania and Branch Avenue
11 is currently it's on C1 and the C1 is defined
12 as a matter of right, neighborhood shopping
13 at low density permitting a mass -- and
14 allowing density of 60 percent for
15 residential and three storied buildings and a
16 height of 40 feet.

17 Redevelopment of the shopping
18 center is _____ for the final
19 draft of the Pennsylvania Avenue Southeast
20 corridor land development opportunities of

21 Penn Branch shopping area, states development

22 of the center will be five stories from the

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1 lowest point with 65 feet maximum height,
2 five stories maximum height from the south
3 side of Pennsylvania Avenue as well.

4 This will require changes from C1
5 to C2B. Such a change is not consistent with
6 the surrounding community of low density
7 housing. It will, I believe be more
8 appropriate on Pennsylvania Avenue, and
9 Capitol Hill, which consist of three and four
10 storied ————— small houses.

11 Similarly, I think ————— I
12 still believe that this community, few in the
13 community-based organizations, I think would
14 not like to see the upside required for the
15 shopping center's redevelopment.

16 They object to the increased height
17 and the density that it would bring. I
18 suspect the same people the developer
19 anticipates would be a good part of the
20 revenue stream ready to support the

21 redevelopment center with all these people.

22 So it begs the question, will the

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1 anticipated revenue from the center's
2 proposed residential component, will
3 sufficiently have robust support from the
4 surrounding community? _____
5 Which I guess is a roll of the dice, and it
6 is a developer's call.
7 I believe the community understands
8 the developers engage in a _____
9 enterprise with the objective of maximum
10 amounts of return on investment and from a
11 community's non-stop _____ on the
12 subject, people of the community understand
13 that the community does not want to be
14 overwhelmed by the improvements that they
15 would like to see at the shopping center.
16 With the developer -- well, okay.
17 With that having been said, I
18 believe that -- personally I would like to
19 see a balance struck between the community
20 and the developer -- what the developer wants

21 at the site. Possibly redevelopment of three

22 _____ and four stories at 50 feet, at any

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1 one block on the site, and a limitation on
2 residential _____ 70 to 90 units, and
3 a possible addition of _____ on the
4 component.

5 It will depend upon the
6 configuration of the _____
7 economics as well, because I believe that
8 it'd be a good place to start the
9 finalization of redevelopment plan for the
10 Pennsylvania Avenue shop itself.

11 Thank you for affording me this
12 opportunity to air my views on this matter,
13 and I would appreciate it if you would give
14 it serious consideration.

15 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins.

16 I just forgot to point out that Debra Crane
17 here will be flashing the one minute
18 remaining sign, and the time-up sign, so just
19 be mindful of that. Next I would like to
20 call Mr. Gilbert Bussey, please.

21 MR. BUSSEY: Okay, thank you.

22 Thank you, sir. My name is Gil Bussey, and I

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1 represent Penn Branch Citizens Civic
2 Association as the president. I've already
3 said that if we all thought alike, then not
4 anyone would be doing any thinking. So
5 obviously there's some different thoughts and
6 so forth among people here today, but from my
7 experience at our meetings, Penn Branch
8 meetings, overwhelmingly, the residents of
9 Penn Branch are opposed to this plan. We've
10 been here before and we've heard things,
11 presentations, about Office of Planning and
12 what not and they tell us, hey, this is just
13 the planning stage.

14 Well, now it looks like it's a done
15 deal. I don't know if that's the case or
16 not. But however, I think Mr. Hawkins has
17 said some things that I was about to say, of
18 this height restriction, so forth and so on.
19 I've lived here for 40 years and before that
20 I was a police officer in this area, prior to

21 that, and Penn Branch has always been a very
22 nice residential neighborhood.

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1 If we start adding height to it,
2 we're talking about retail and so forth and
3 so on, of course that's needed. But I do
4 believe that we can overbuild things. There
5 are other places where these things would fit
6 a little bit better.

7 And we can't do this over on
8 _____. We've got federal parkland on
9 side, we've got residential homes going all
10 the way to Alabama Avenue, and all you have
11 left is Penn Branch.

12 So what are you doing to do,
13 overload Penn Branch with these things? I
14 hear them talking about underground parking.

15 I don't know if -- that's all I
16 really wanted to say. A little tip _____
17 _____, and I don't know if John _____
18 have looked into that, how long _____
19 parking spaces are going to stand up and what
20 not. But _____ told me I didn't have the

- 21 three minutes, I can't talk but so long
- 22 anyway. Besides I've always heard that it's

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1 best to be brief, be blunt, and be seated.

2 I'm about to be seated.

3 However, I would just like to say,
4 if you take in all the Penn Branch members,
5 members who live in Penn Branch, some 500
6 households in all, the vast majority of them
7 are opposed to this overall plan. Thank you.

8 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr.
9 President. Next I'd like to call James
10 Ferguson, please.

11 MR. FERGUSON: Thank you. My name
12 is James Ferguson, and I'm a resident of
13 Washington, D.C. I am a long time resident
14 and more importantly I'm a member of the Penn
15 Branch Citizen Civic Association.

16 We have, over the last year and a
17 half, had numerous meetings, whether it may
18 be committee hearings, whether they be
19 association meetings, we had meetings with
20 the planning department, individual planners

21 themselves, and the whole time our message

22 was that if you're not accountable you don't

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1 get the plans that were being promulgated,
2 and that we in fact worked to have a
3 different perspective in terms of the
4 development.

5 I think we at some point we met
6 with a developer and at that time it was
7 clear that we were not supportive of the
8 plan. Now we come to January the 17th, 2008
9 and this is the plan whether we have comments
10 to the contrary or not.

11 It's obviously a process and that
12 process obviously may include change. Change
13 is possible. This is all political. So
14 obviously our next step is politics. I mean,
15 _____ city council members having a
16 direct _____ to our Congressperson to
17 have basic changes because this doesn't
18 really make sense.

19 Now I was working very closely with
20 all the -- including the planning department,

21 _____ council people to make sure that
22 they know what our message is.

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1 I don't think the planning
2 department had any communication with the
3 mayor. If they had, they would not know that
4 the mayor wasn't _____, that he said
5 he is opposed to this as we are. They'd know
6 he said that he would support our position,
7 so I don't think there's been any
8 communication.

9 I understand my minute is coming
10 very quickly. I got a minute? Okay.

11 SPEAKER: You've got a minute left.

12 MR. FERGUSON: I got a minute,
13 okay. Let me see what we're looking at. The
14 discussion going on, at one point, with Mrs.
15 Cassandra -- is she here tonight?

16 SPEAKER: She is in the hospital.

17 MR. FERGUSON: She's in the
18 hospital? Well, I'm sorry to hear that --
19 indicated that we wanted a smaller
20 condominium scale in terms of the density

- 21 development. Made a smaller, more community-
- 22 friendly development. That has been

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1 _____ . To the contrary,

2 we've seen the site plan, which it -- our

3 problem as a community to keep its scale.

4 So I just want to go on record to

5 say we oppose it, the Penn Branch Citizen

6 Civic Association opposes it, and we will

7 make sure that our voice is heard. Thank

8 you.

9 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr.

10 Ferguson. The next speaker on our list, I

11 don't believe is here yet. He's over -- Mr.

12 Paul?

13 SPEAKER: Not present.

14 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Well, we'll

15 continue with the next person on the list.

16 We have Ms. Carrie James.

17 MS. JAMES: Carrie James, I reside

18 at _____ -- oh, sorry.

19 SPEAKER: Just hold it up.

20 MS. JAMES: I'm presenting

- 21 testimony from the Penn Branch Citizen Civic
- 22 Association regarding Southeast corridor land

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1 development plan, specifically the Penn
2 Branch shopping area. When I reviewed your
3 proposal, _____

_____ it is important to
5 make my voice heard. The goal of Office of
6 Planning appears to be to add more retail and
7 commercial development on Florida and I don't
8 recall hearing any one express an interest of
9 this nature. This hysterical future vision
10 describing plan is not acceptable and we
11 should _____ from our Penn Branch
12 neighbors that attended, the goal seems alien
13 to those that I've heard.

14 The predominant land use in the
15 _____ is currently residential. In my
16 opinion it really should be totally
17 residential. We don't need _____. We
18 are basically a tranquil, well-maintained,
19 and comfortable neighborhood. We want to

20 keep it that way. We don't need added
21 activity and traffic problems that would
22 accompany a change.

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1 We need you to insist that we
2 should _____
_____. At

3 this time, I'd like to close by saying no.
4 No, to a change of the existent zoning to
5 more of density, no to an introduction of
6 high-rise structures in the neighborhood, no
7 to the expansion of retail and commercial
8 space in the neighborhood. Thank you for
9 your time.

10 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Ms. James,
11 and the next person on the list is Mr. Juan
12 Thompson.

13 MR. THOMPSON: Good evening. _____
14 _____ Civic Association speaking
15 as a resident of 3519 Texas Avenue. Looking
16 at the plan this evening and after hearing
17 some of the Pennsylvania Avenue Task Force
18 meeting, it is my conclusion that it is not
19 going to be beneficial to the Pennsylvania

20 Penn Branch Avenue.

21 Maybe the development of the area

22 could be _____. I'm not in

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1 agreement with changing the zoning, and I
2 would prefer that it be _____ forward,
3 whether it _____ commercial district or a
4 residential district. Looking at the
5 topography myself, living in the
6 neighborhood, I would propose the _____
7 develop under a five storey apartment _____
8 _____ stories, instead of the five
9 proposed.

10 I am also concerned about the
11 carbon footprint of the new traffic being in
12 here, so -- we have the second largest
13 traffic problem in this area, so adding more
14 traffic here would not be advantageous to the
15 neighborhood. So I am opposed to the zonal
16 change that's set forth. Thank you.

17 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr.
18 Thompson. I would now like to bring out Ms.
19 Laura Richards.

20 MS. RICHARDS: Hello. I'm Laura

- 21 Richards, I'm co-chair of the legislative
22 committee of Penn Branch and a Penn Branch

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1 resident. We have submitted our testimony
2 for the record. I'd like to review what we
3 submitted. First, we've submitted the
4 specific _____ proposals, specific

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____ particularly that the
8 future _____ states that the low
9 density commercial should only be about three
10 stories high and _____ it
11 has to be seven stories or more once you add
12 in the _____ and HUD bonuses and
13 once you consider roof structures. Also the
14 policy map, which looks at the development --
15 25 years says that there is _____

16 _____ stable, but somehow _____

17 _____

18 proposals. In addition to the provisions of

19 the plan, we have submitted a _____
20 _____ council, which did propose
21 to _____ increase the density of
22 that site -- and which was _____

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1 by counsel, we seem to have a -- proposal
2 coming back at us again. In addition to that
3 we are _____ submitted
the

4 testimony submitted by the concerned citizens
5 of eastern Washington regarding the EIS, the
6 11th Street Bridges, a good deal of which
7 addresses traffic congestion on Pennsylvania
8 Avenue, which will be adversely affected.

9 We're also submitting the mobility
10 study submitted to the council during the EIS
11 hearings by Capitol Hill Restoration Society,
12 many provisions of which discuss the traffic
13 congestion along Pennsylvania Avenue, which
14 will be adversely impacted by this proposal.

15 We've also submitted our letter to
16 the council members, which basically outlines
17 the chronology of what we've gone through
18 since '06 in protesting this. And it states
19 specifically that we resent that we're not

20 going to be _____ the same

21 treatment as to white neighborhoods, upper

22 Wisconsin Avenue and Capitol Hill.

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1 The president of the Capitol Hill
2 Restoration Society said that with respect to
3 the Office of Planning, "We told them what we
4 wanted and we got it." I expect to be
5 testifying to that on our behalf _____
6 _____. In addition _____ submitting a
7 testimony that we -- turned into council
8 regarding the 11th Street _____
9 discussing traffic.

10 Finally, we're submitting the
11 employer proposal that we intend to okay in
12 November 19, 2006, requesting e-mails and
13 many other things regarding the site, which
14 we have never yet had any response to other
15 than something off the website, which we will
16 be _____
and which
17 we will litigate aggressively to find out
18 what's going on here. So thank you very
19 much.

20 MR. DAVIS: We would now like to

21 call Mr. Leroy Hicks, please.

22 MR. HICKS: Good evening. I'm in

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1 the 3200 block of Polk Street since 1966, and
2 soon after I came out here, I -- you know, I
3 heard about this Pennsylvania Avenue Task
4 Force, and my question is, to this panel, is
5 what happened to the Pennsylvania Avenue Task
6 Force, because I understand that Pennsylvania
7 Avenue Task Force was supposed to take
8 suggestions from the residents of the
9 neighborhood and work with that when they
10 come up with a plan for Pennsylvania Avenue.
11 That's something for you to think about.

12 We -- I believe -- but I am
13 thoroughly against any type of change of our
14 zoning law to accommodate the type of
15 buildings that I see around me. Because I
16 feel that you would change the residential
17 area from a residential area to another, I
18 guess, commercial area.

19 I think it's too large and I wish
20 this panel will think -- would think about

- 21 something like Chevy Chase Village project,
22 that exists in the District of Columbia right

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1 next to the line, and therefore eliminating
2 this type of -- these type of plans for this
3 area, thank you.

4 MR. DAVIS: Now, I'd like to call
5 on Ms. Thelma Jones, please.

6 MS. JONES: Good evening. My name
7 is Thelma Jones, 2217 T place Southeast,
8 president of the Fairlawn Citizens
9 Association.

10 And I'm here tonight to talk about
11 the area that involves the Fairlawn Citizens
12 Association, which is the area that sits just
13 as you come off of the Sousa Bridge. Now,
14 that developer has already gone to the
15 hearing. We've had the hearing.

16 And I'm speaking to the Office of
17 Planning the next time that things are
18 presented to the office of planning, like the
19 materials that are supposed to be used in a
20 construction of a site. They should present

- 21 those materials to the Office of Planning
- 22 before and not at the hearing, because, I was

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1 told that we were supposed to have brick
2 facades, but they didn't even show the
3 facades until one of the commissioners at the
4 hearing asked to see it and they are fake
5 bricks.

6 Over on this side of the river, all
7 of the houses and businesses are of mortar
8 bricks. And if you're going to do any
9 development over on the southeast side of the
10 bridge, it needs to be done commensurate with
11 the bricks that are in the community. We
12 would like to keep this a community that's
13 built of bricks and mortar, and not fake
14 bricks and aluminum siding.

15 So we are going to stay in the
16 historic aspect of that, and also we would
17 like not to have the height of the buildings
18 coming across this river that are too tall,
19 because when you come out of that bridge, you
20 don't need to see a very tall building. So I

- 21 know I -- okay, well, anyway at the hearing I
- 22 hope that people come out and speak against

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1 the height and the type of material. If
2 they're going to redevelop anything over here
3 that will be commensurate with what's already
4 in the community.

5 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Ms. Jones.
6 Now, is there anyone else in the audience who
7 would like to speak? You just state your
8 name and affiliation in our microphone. And
9 you have 3 minutes. Thank you.

10 MS. WILSON: My name is Ethel
11 Wilson, and I am a member of Dupont Park
12 Citizens Association. I live at 3130
13 Pennsylvania Avenue Southeast. I've been in
14 this community now for about 33 years, and
15 I'm also a member of Penn Branch Civic
16 Association.

17 But I would like to say that I love
18 my community. I like the way it looks in
19 terms of what it has to offer, in terms of
20 the architecture that we now have, when I

21 came into this community, that was the way

22 that the architecture that we had was what

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1 sold me my home.

2 I am not opposed to having the
3 shopping center remodeled, because I think
4 all of us would like to see change there.

5 I've heard people speak about how they want
6 change.

7 I came to my first meeting, I
8 think, during the early part of the fall, and
9 people were speaking about change, we want
10 change, we want to see change in the shopping
11 area. But at the same time, I've heard the
12 community people and neighbors say we do not
13 wish to have a skyscraper building there.

14 The skyscrapers are usually -- the
15 skyscraper would indeed change the
16 architecture of our community. And I know I
17 have personally experienced having to live
18 close by a skyscraper building. This kind of
19 change is very pervasive. It does indeed
20 impact on a person.

21 So I believe that if we're going to
22 try to change the shopping center that we

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1 need to consider the needs of the community,
2 and we need to be respected and compassionate
3 about our neighborhood as it is and not
4 necessarily come in with a skyscraper
5 building.

6 If we can indeed come up with a way
7 where there can be some type of change within
8 that shopping area where we could get our
9 needs met and perhaps the builder could
10 modify his plans, then maybe we can meet a
11 compromise of some kind, but change can never
12 take place as we both take separate and
13 opposing views. We need to come together if
14 we can. Thank you.

15 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Ms. Wilson.

16 For anyone else who are still here, is there
17 anyone else who would like to state anything
18 for the official record even if it's just a
19 few comments?

20 SPEAKER: _____.

21 SPEAKER: Okay, sure. Again,
22 please just state your name and affiliation

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1 through the microphone before you begin.

2 MR. ROBERSON: Hello, my name is

3 Dwayne Roberson and I'm a resident of 1501

4 27th Street Southeast. I guess, I can talk

5 about that area.

6 I do agree with development in that

7 area. I believe that we are underdeveloped

8 in that area. You know, gas stations, liquor

9 stores, all types of different things that if

10 we had a good plan to transform these things

11 there's something positive that people can

12 walk to. You know, you shouldn't have to go

13 across the bridge to get basic services, and

14 that's the part that I agree with.

15 I agree that maybe the height of

16 certain buildings could be adjusted, but I

17 think there could be a happy medium in

18 between too. But there are basic services

19 that are needed, and we just don't have, just

20 point blank.

21 So I agree with the plan if they
22 are -- you know, if they can be adjusted to

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1 suit everyone's needs, I do just strongly
2 agree that there should be development in
3 this area.

4 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr.
5 Roberson. Last call for anyone who would
6 like to speak. Do want to let you know that
7 even if you didn't get to say everything you
8 wanted to say, again, I reiterate that all of
9 your written comments will be submitted.

10 If you know of anyone who wanted to
11 be here tonight who's not here, they can
12 still submit their written comments to us in
13 the next couple of weeks. It won't be part
14 of the official transcription of course, but
15 we will be happy to include that in what we
16 sent to Capitol.

17 SPEAKER: _____ specific day?

18 MR. DAVIS: I would say within the
19 next 2 weeks, let's see -- 2 weeks from today
20 is the 30th or the 31st. So if we're going

21 to receive any comments by the end of this

22 month, we'll make sure that those are all

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1 included with the official packet that goes
 2 to council, so please do tell your neighbors
 3 not to wait, we want to hear as many comments
 4 as we can. All right?

5 SPEAKER: _____ transcript
 6 of the hearing?

7 MR. DAVIS: Transcripts of the
 8 hearing will be -- we have a 2-week
 9 turnaround. You know, we have a 2-week
 10 turnaround, and then those will be available.

11 MS. GARDNER: Thanks, everyone.

12 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, at 7:15 p.m., the
 14 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

15

16

17

18 * * * * *

19

20

21

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